

Report of the New Jersey Urban League for the
Month of October, 1943.

Further developments in three situations presented in the September report, are as follows:

The Board of Health crusade against poor housing created the new problem of terminating water service to families forced to continue occupancy of condemned dwellings. After several fruitless attempts to remedy this situation through the Board of Health, the executive presented the matter to Director Brady who has ordered uninterrupted water services in such cases. The Hemphill case, involving threats to return this worker to a Mississippi lumber mill through War Manpower Commission power, has been resolved for the time being. Meantime, we have made representations to the former employer and the Wages and Hours Division of the Labor Department for uncollected overtime wages due and to the Treasury Department for War Bond monies withheld by the erstwhile employer. The case against the Welding Training Institute was closed by the State Department of Education on the penitence plea of Institute officials, and promises made by them to employ ethical advertising and approved teaching and placement methods. Efforts to secure tuition refund for the complaining witness are continuing.

The executive reported verbally at the last board meeting, the case of James Drew, amnesia victim who had been held in the local county jail for one month before the situation was brought to our attention. He was apprehended by local police on the afternoon of September 16, in the Ironbound section; and booked on a charge of disorderly conduct. His queer actions suggested a mental case, but the several identification cards in his possession bearing his New York address were ignored and he was transferred to county jail for observation. Meanwhile, his wife visited Newark police and registered his disappearance with the Missing Persons Bureau, here and in New York. She had received no word from him, the police, or his Newark employer, until October 17, after our office had visited headquarters, talked with the "prisoner" and communicated with his wife through the New York Urban League office. Through arrangements with Judge Untermann, agreed to by the wife, Drew was delivered by local police to the 135th Street Station in New York, and subsequently transferred to Bellevue Hospital. This whole affair was a flagrant example of calloused bungling when Drew's record disclosed an honest, hard-working father of three adolescent boys, whose excessive program of overtime work and night school studying had precipitated the mental breakdown which in turn resulted in a full month's incarceration, virtually incommunicado, as a common violator of the law.

The Workers' Council has resumed its activities with its first meeting late in October. It is paying its \$50 pledge for 1943 and gave a 1944 pledge in the same amount in the Community Chest Drive.

Local interracial groups are continuing their programs, the executive participating in eight conference sessions of the three organizations and their sub-committees. While seven of these sessions were of routine nature in the promotion of the general programs of each, the eighth conference deserves special mention. Through the persistent efforts of the Hospital Committee of the Newark Interracial Council of Essex County, a conference was arranged to discuss the old problem of integrating Negro professionals in local hospitals. The immediate result was an agreement that the Hospital Council would work actively for the placement of Negro nurses in the several hospitals in the community, with the Interracial Council and the Graduate Nurses' Association providing a list of registered nurses. This list is being assembled at this reporting.

On October 20, the Trustees assembled to interview the two finalists from the list of applicants for the position of industrial secretary. A candidate from Atlanta, Georgia was summoned at our expense, and the leading candidate from the local metropolitan area reappeared. The latter, James A. McNeal was chosen because of his superior work experience record, as well as for his apparent immunity from military service. As he reported for duty on Monday November 1, he presented a post card notice received that day, announcing his reclassification from 4F to 1A. On subsequent appeal he has been granted a six-months' deferment by his draft board.

The executive has heard the usual complaints and requests for information; has investigated an ODB employee complaint; and has cooperated with the Rosenwald project being conducted by Dr. Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University, by reporting current developments in racial relations. He has delivered ten addresses in seven north Jersey communities, to an aggregate audience of 1400 people.

There were only 66 new work applications registered, 53 of which were by women; a total of 101 employers' orders accepted, and 76 placements made. Eleven of these were female industrial workers and 60 were domestic.

Respectfully submitted,


Harold A. Lett
Executive Secretary